



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20014

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DEC 15 1969

December 10, 1969

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics  
Stanford University  
Medical Center  
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I was delighted to read your editorial "Pretesting chemical additives" in C and E News of December 8, 1969, as well as similar comments expressed in one of your weekly newspaper columns.

We have been concerned with this problem of evaluating materials in our environment for carcinogenicity or indeed any other untoward toxic effect for many years. We believe that we need to safeguard the future health of our people. In our view many cases of cancer seen at this time are due to exposure to environmental factors many years ago. I personally believe that many such factors were "naturally occurring" rather than synthetic materials. Cancers of the type seen in our industrialized civilization are also seen in more primitive environments where the products of industry cannot be possibly responsible. However, superimposed on this natural background of carcinogen we now have the additional possible contamination by synthetics.

Our concern is to reduce as much as possible the carcinogen loads from all sources, synthetic or naturally occurring. You express this idea very well in the editorial. We have discussed this very same problem in a recent paper in Food and Cosmetics Toxicology. I am pleased to send you a reprint.

Sincerely yours,

John H. Weisburger, Ph.D.  
Head, Carcinogen Screening Section  
Biology Branch, Etiology  
National Cancer Institute